

Yiian-hung regard his position as untenable. Li, disheartened, once more withdrew to the quiet security of his home in a foreign concession in Tientsin. Soon afterward (September, 1923), Wu's technical superior, Ts'ao Kun, by the brazen use of heavy bribes, was elected to the Presidency by what remained of the Parliament of 1913. The twelfth anniversary of the Revolution of 1911 was celebrated by the promulgation of what was optimistically called the "permanent" constitution.

By this time the recurrence of civil war had become almost as regular an annual event as the return of spring, and in 1924 the major generals were once more moving against each other. This year Chang Tso-lin was victorious, due chiefly to the sudden defection of Feng Yii-hsiang from Wu P'ei-fu. Ts'ao Kun was deprived of his office and imprisoned, and Feng and Chang placed Tuau Ch'i-jui at the head of the Peking Government. Tuan, however, did not have the title of President, but was designated what may be translated as Provisional Chief Executive. Moreover, he had under him only the skeleton of a national government. In 1925 the inevitable falling-out between Feng and Chang resulted in the withdrawal of the latter, thanks to the disloyalty of some subordinates. The following year (1926), however, Wu P'ei-fu and Chang Tso-lin ignored their differences for the moment and joined in driving Feng Yii-hsiang's forces out of Peking and into the Northwest. A few weeks afterward, Tuan Ch'i-jui retired to the convenient haven of Tientsin. Not even a "Provisional Chief Executive" was left in the capital. A rapidly shifting cabinet kept up, with the consent of the warlords, the form of a government with which the powers, in default of anything bet-

ter, were willing to deal under the fiction that it was
the legal representative of China.

While what remained of a government at Peking
went through the motions of speaking for the country, all
semblance of actual national political unity was rapidly disappearing.
In fact the country was divided among many warring
chieftains, most of whom rose to power rapidly and as quickly
disappeared, and the boundaries of whose spheres of influence were
constantly shifting. Throughout the country, however, the continuous
strife was producing increasing war weariness. Moreover, the
spirit of nationalism, reenforced by the impetus given it
almost everywhere